Book Reviews

Florida Historical Society
membership@myfloridahistory.org

Book Reviews

To Make This Land Our Own: Community, Identity, and Cultural Adaptation in Purrysburg, South Township, South Carolina, 1732-1865. By Arlin C. Migliazzo. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007. Illustrations, foreword, preface, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index, about the author. Pp. xxi, 437. $59.95 cloth.)

To Make This Land Our Own is an exhaustive account of a remarkably diverse southern town, from its precarious beginnings as a frontier settlement to its heyday and decline as an agricultural community. Arlin Migliazzo intends to rescue from obscurity the "other South" that has received little attention from social historians—a South of contractual communities, ethnically diverse immigrants, and innovative cultural adaptation. Purrysburg, South Carolina's first township, possessed all of these characteristics. Its founder, Jean Pierre Purry, recruited French, Swiss, German, English, and Italian settlers from a variety of regions and Protestant confessions to commit to his vision. He theorized that areas in a particular "climate zone"—surrounding the thirty-third degree of latitude—were "ideal climates for human ecology," and he pictured himself governing a cohesive village as a sort of benevolent feudal lord (18). Hoping to mitigate the colony's growing reliance on slave labor as well as strengthen its defensive capabilities, the British empire viewed Purry's plan as a way to populate their southern frontier with skilled white immigrants. Neither of these visions accounted for the challenges facing the immigrants, who spent years eking out a substandard existence with wine and silk production before they gained access to sufficient amounts of fertile land to establish a diffuse plantation economy producing lucrative staples.

Migliazzo uses Purrysburg to challenge conventional definitions of "community." To historians for whom the geographically centered, values oriented New England village was the model of a real community, the culturally diverse and decentralized Purrysburg is a failure. But Migliazzo argues that "community networks can be forged between individuals otherwise separated by distance," such as the relationships that Purrysburg settlers formed with co-religionists and fellow linguists in nearby towns of Savannah and Ebenezer (299). Purrysburg's village was depopulated as residents progressively adopted slave-based agriculture, as not only linguistic and religious differences but also "commercial constraints inhibited a sense of community solidarity inside the township" (300). But "with the maturation of the native-born generation, Purrysburg families were finally able to strengthen horizontal relationships within the township itself," as planters grew increasingly wealthy and the Purrsyburg wharf maintained a steady business sending products down the Savannah River to Charles Town (300). Although Purry's initial conceptualization of the township did encounter problems, "it was the ultimate success of his colonial vision based on the productive agricultural potential of South Carolina that contributed to the deurbanization of the township—not its failure" (300).

Migliazzi more tentatively draws conclusions about the preservation of ethnic identity in Purrysburg. He finds evidence of ethnic identification late in the antebellum period that is more suggestive than conclusive, considering the limitations of existing sources (as Migliazzo admits). His primary objective is to prove that white culture in the antebellum South was not assimilationist or homogeneous, which he does by highlighting examples of "selective adaptation" (306). Purrysburg settlers did form interethnic marriages within their first five years in America and established commercial relationships across cultural boundaries with each other as well as with more distant neighbors. But they sometimes showed signs of continuing identification with their specific European heritage late in the colonial period. For example, a large proportion of intra-township financial transactions and long-standing professional relationships existed between members of the same linguistic group, and documents in French were produced decades after settlement. Nineteenth-century naming patterns and references to European ancestors, such as the founding of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina, suggest to some

degree "the perseverance of an ethnic awareness" beyond the American Revolution (305).

Migliazzo's treatment of Purrysburg enriches historians' view of the early South by highlighting its ethnic diversity and reminding us that colonizers of the southern frontier founded towns with the same amount of idealism and communal vision as did the Puritans of New England, even if the products of those visions ultimately took very different forms. Much of Migliazzo's information about Purrysburg comes from observers in Ebenezer, a neighboring Georgia town which, coincidentally, was founded with equally idealistic goals and populated by a combination of German and Swiss immigrants. More comparisons between the two towns might have produced additional support for Migliazzo's hypothesis about ethnic identity, and it certainly would have furthered his purpose of exhibiting southern diversity. As strictly a community study, this book provides a slow journey through detailed accounts that will be useful for anyone doing geneological or regional research, but it will be rather tedious for readers who do not share a specific interest in Purrysburg.

Ashley E. Moreshead *University of Delaware*

Coastal Encounters: The Transformation of the Gulf South in the Eighteenth Century. Edited and with introduction by Richmond F. Brown. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008. Pp. xiv, 314. Preface, introduction, maps, tables, figures, notes, bibliography, contributors. $24.95 paper.)

Coastal Encounters is a collection of essays written by an impressive group of scholars specializing in Eighteenth Century America. The editor, Richmond F. Brown, argues that the coast of the Gulf of Mexico in what is today the United States has too often been ignored by historians. According to Brown, historians tend to notice this region only when there are major events or when it comes into contact with outside forces. Brown's intention is to offer a glimpse of what life was like in the Gulf South before it became part of the United States.

Although in his introduction, Dr. Brown seems to have a deeper interest in Mobile and New Orleans, Florida is equally represented in the essays. Of the ten essays dealing with a specific location, there are as many dealing with Florida as with Alabama

or Louisiana. Amy Turner Bushnell, in her chapter, "Escape of the Nickaleers," examines the relationship of the English and Spanish and the Native Americans on the coast of Florida in 1696. Jane Landers discusses the relationship between the Seminoles and those of African descent who joined the Seminoles in order to avoid slavery. Andrew McMichael examines how Anglo settlers in West Florida changed allegiances between Spain, Britain and the United States depending on what served their best interests.

As the title implies, the book presents the region as a borderland where very different groups learn to interact with one another in order to survive, and where the powerless learn to play the powerful against each other. The book does not break any new ground. The term "frontier" has lost favor with most historians as it gave the impression of civilization conquering the uncivilized. "Frontier" has been replaced by "borderland." In borderlands, the indigenous people had agency. This is demonstrated in several of the essays. Greg O'Brien in his essay "Supplying Our Wants" shows how the Choctows and Chickasaws benefited from British fear that they might side with the French. In "The Founding of Tensaw," Karl Davis shows how the Creeks intermarried with British merchants in order to secure beneficial trading agreements. David Wheat in "My Friend Nicholas Mongoula" shows how a free black man moved between the European and Native American cultures in Eighteenth Century Mobile and used his ability as a cultural translator to profit personally.

The weakness of *Coastal Encounters* is the same weakness of all collections of essays; it is extremely difficult to maintain a comprehensive theme. What it offers is several snapshots of life on the Gulf Coast of what is today the United States. Many of the essays discuss a very limited subject with little or no argument or proof that the anecdotal evidence is representative of life on the Eighteenth Century Gulf Coast. Bushnell examines a journal kept by a Quaker merchant stranded on the east coast of Florida. The journal is a wonderful source that helps us understand Spanish Florida but no evidence is offered that the experience of these Quakers was not unique. David Wheat examines the life of a single free black man living in Mobile and Virginia Meacham Gould writes about a free Afro-Creole woman in New Orleans. While these are all interesting case studies they are limited in their sources and their scope.

Coastal Encounters is aimed at a professional audience. It requires prior knowledge of the subject and its historiography. It

is very likely that *Coastal Encounters* will be on the required reading list for graduate history courses on the American South. The book offers a great deal to the professional historian researching this region. An author attempting to make wider arguments about the region could benefit greatly from the work done in *Coastal Encounters.*

Coastal Encounters shows that the Gulf South could be a complex region as different cultures competed and worked together in order to survive. Through the time of first European contact until the entire area was dominated by the United States, possession of the region changed more than any other place in North America. The Native Americans and many residents of European or African descent had to adapt their cultures to survive in an ever changing world. *Coastal Encounters* gives us a brief glimpse into this world.

Wesley Moody *Florida Community College at Jacksonville*

The Papers of Andrew Jackson: Volume VII, 1829. Edited by Daniel Feller et al. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007. Index. Pp. xxix, 826. $79.00 cloth.)

After more than two decades under the direction of Harold Moser, the *Papers of Andrew Jackson* project, housed at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, is now in the capable hands of Daniel Feller. Well known for his synthetic treatment of the period, *The Jacksonian Promise: America, 1815-1840* (1995), and several important articles on Jacksonian historiography, Feller takes over the chief editorship of the series as it enters Old Hickory's inaugural presidential year of 1829. Two assistant editors, Laura-Eve Moss and Thomas Coens, bring additional editorial and scholarly experience to the project.

The organization of the seventh volume resembles previous volumes in the series, with notable improvements. The introduction contains a more extensive explanation of how and why documents were chosen for full publication. Also included at the beginning of the volume is a list of principal characters who took part in Jackson's first months in office; this list will prove particularly useful for those scholars using the Jackson series for the first time. The explanatory footnotes that accompany most of the documents are a wealth of information themselves, as they provide the background of the papers and the individuals connected with

them. Two minor suggestions for improvement are that future volumes should incorporate in the introduction a short summary of the historical period covered in the volume, as well as an acknowledgements section that recognizes the contributions made to the volume by scholars and laypersons.

The documents in this seventh volume focus on three major issues that Jackson faced during his first year in office: government patronage, the Eaton affair, and Indian removal. Opponents criticized Jackson's decision to replace officeholders who had come to think of the office as "a vested right" with those who were "good." Instead of viewing his decisions as creating a "spoils system," Jackson worked to establish what he called "rotation in office" in order to "perpetuate our liberty" (193). This approach to patronage encouraged applicants to plead for appointments to government positions for themselves, relatives, and friends. Not all were happy with the new president's response. Chesed P. Montgomery, for example, the son of one of Jackson's oldest North Carolina acquaintances, made a nuisance of himself by asking Jackson first for a government clerkship, then a substantial amount of money and a horse. When Jackson only sent him $30, Montgomery blamed Andrew Jackson Donelson, the president's nephew and private secretary, for poisoning Jackson's opinion of him and threatened to "have a street fight" with Donelson (382).

In addition to questions about patronage, Jackson almost immediately upon taking office addressed one of his major objectives: the removal of Native Americans from lands east of the Mississippi River. Numerous petitions from Native Americans arrived at the President's Mansion, asking for his assistance with fraudulent treaty negotiations and corrupt government agents. For example, John Ross, chief of the Cherokee Nation, asked the president to remove Hugh Lawson Montgomery, who had been a United States agent to the Cherokee since 1825, because of implied misdeeds. Instead of agreeing to the request, Jackson allowed Montgomery to serve until 1835. Jackson's approach to the various native peoples, particularly those in the Southeast, was made clear in a letter to the Creek: "Where you now are, you and my white children are too near to each other to live I harmony and peace. . . . Beyond the river Mississippi, . . . your father has provided a country large enough for all of you, and he advises you to remove to it" (112). This advice would be repeated throughout 1829; those tribes that did not follow the president's advice found

themselves faced with forced removal when Congress passed the Indian Removal Act in 1830.

Weighing heavily on Jackson's mind throughout 1829 was the brouhaha over the marriage of his friend and secretary of war, John H. Eaton, to Washington socialite Margaret O'Neale Timberlake. Washington society was abuzz over the questionable circumstances surrounding the death of Margaret's first husband, John Timberlake, who had allegedly slit his own throat while serving as a navy purser on board the *Constitution.* The rumored cause of his suicide was the knowledge that his wife and best friend, John Eaton, were having an extramarital affair. When the widow and best friend married, with Jackson's blessing, nine months after Timberlake's death, Washingtonians were scandalized. Attempts to uncover the details of the Eatons' alleged affair and to limit social interactions with the couple were brought to Jackson's attention. Still grieving the death of his wife, Rachel, and remembering the accusations of impropriety surrounding their own marriage, the president spent enormous energy defending his friends. When Reverend Ezra Stiles Ely, a Philadelphia minister, wrote Jackson to communicate rumors about the Eatons' supposed affair, Jackson investigated the accusations and refuted them. The president reacted in similar fashion to his own minister, John N. Campbell, and one of his former military aides, Richard Keith Call. Jackson blamed the women of Washington, particularly the wives of cabinet officials, for originating and perpetuating the rumors against the Eatons. He believed them to be the "satelites [*sic*] of [Henry] Clay," whom he still hated for his complicity in the "corrupt bargain" of 1825 (200). Despite his efforts, Jackson's administration would continue to be distracted by this so-called Petticoat War well into 1831.

Jackson had other concerns as well during his initial months in Washington. Reports that his overseer at the Hermitage was abusing slaves led Jackson to ask his adopted son, Andrew Jackson, Jr., to investigate the charges, which uncovered no wrongdoing. The president also dispensed advice on finding a suitable wife. When one of his son's potential relationships failed because the woman had "give herself up to coquettry [*sic*]," Jackson told him to "enter no more love affairs, until you see me" (447, 386). The president also faced a recalcitrant ward in the person of Andrew Jackson Hutchings, who was expelled from a school in Nashville. Jackson sent numerous letters to friends and

relatives, including Hutchings, to advise them on how he wanted the young man to act more appropriately. These letters remind us that Jackson, like every president, had other things on his mind besides matters of state.

The careful attention that the editorial team has given to this seventh volume of the *Papers of Andrew Jackson* leaves one optimistic about the expeditious completion of the series. Perhaps it will help scholars recognize that other presidential papers, including those of Martin Van Buren, need similar treatment to make them more accessible to researchers and to encourage new investigations into the events of the Jacksonian period.

Mark R. Cheathem *Southern New Hampshire University*

White Enough to Be an American: Race Mixing, Indigenous People, and the Boundaries of State and Nation. By Lauren L. Basson. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. 256. $59.95 cloth, $22.95 paper.)

Lauren L. Basson comes to history through the discipline of political science and examines the way the government, through courts and legislation, redefined the notion of American citizenship and nationhood in the late 19th century. Unlike most other critical race studies Basson is solely interested in people of mixed ancestry specifically those who could claim some European and Indian, native Hawaiian and/or Mexican parentage. In this study the author examines five individuals the U. S. court system defined as both mixed-race and not American.

Those familiar with the story of the "strange career" of Jim Crow America will not dispute her conclusions that people of mixed race ancestry posed a legal and political problem to a country quantifying race by measuring drops of blood. Although the author meticulously weaves the historical context for each of these four cases to demonstrate how each case is indicative of the transformation of what race meant in America at that time, this book is ultimately the story of those five cases and the legislation surrounding them. While four of the five identified themselves as Indians, Basson does not approach the ethnohistorical theoretical frameworks of Theda Purdue and Claudio Saunt. Readers may find this an odd omission since both historians' later works exam-

ined the question of Indian mixed-blood identities. While Basson helps us to understand how each individual came to their specific identity, at least as a legal definition, this study is about these specific people. We do not get the sense of how indigenous communities generally defined mixed ancestry or how collectively mix-race indigenous people defined themselves within their home communities.

What makes this book really novel are the specific characters she selected. Louis Riel, who was part French and Indian ancestry, Jane Waldron and Barney Traversee both Anglo-American and Indian parentage, Robert Wilcox, who was part European and native Hawaiian and Lucy Parsons, who was part Anglo American and possibly Indian and/or Mexican are all people on the margins who inhabited a borderland legally, racially, and psychically in the places they lived. I cannot think of five more interesting cases for understanding the transformation of race in America at the dawn of the 20th century. Although Basson is interested in how race helped to construct the nation and the state, this is a fantastic launching point to understand the anxiety of American policy makers and jurists witnessing the initial phases of American international expansion—one could say a proto-globalization.

This book really reinforces and complements the works of Grace Elizabeth Hale, David Roediger, and Matthew Frye Jacobson. One may find the citations limiting, but the theory is interesting, engaging and provocative enough to force future studies to address Basson's ideas in broader examinations that move beyond the courtroom.

Robert Cassanello *University of Central Florida*

From Yellow Dog Democrats to Red State Republicans: Florida and Politics since 1940. By David R. Colburn (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007. Acknowledgments, introduction, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. vii, 262. $29.95 cloth.)

David Colburn has written an important companion piece to Gary R. Mormino's *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams* (2005). Where Mormino focused on Florida's changing social character since World War II and excluded politics, Colburn presents the state's political history of approximately the same era enlightening readers about the shift from almost total Democratic control to

Republican dominance at the beginning of the 21st century. "Yellow Dog Democrats," of course, were southerners who would religiously vote for an ugly yellow dog before a Republican.

Colburn acknowledges that both the Democrats in the early years and Republicans generally have largely leaned to the conservative side of the political spectrum. There are exceptions including African Americans, non-Cuban Latinos, university professors, some retirees and Jewish voters. There also were exceptions among Democrats who have won and continue to win elections including LeRoy Collins, Reuben Askew, Bob Graham, Lawton Chiles, Bill Nelson and Alex Sink.

The background, of course, was growth–demographically, economically, culturally and racially. From 1.9 million residents in 1940, Florida grew to 17.4 million people in 2007, the fastest growing large state in the nation. Floridians became remarkably diverse. Only one third were natives. Almost one-fifth were Hispanics from Cuba, the Caribbean, or Latin America. Another fifth were senior citizens over sixty. Fifteen percent were African Americans. There was overlap as seniors could be Latino, black or white, but the resulting rapid and diverse growth made political discourse and control a challenge.

Democrats attempted to maintain control over the years through the strong leadership of Askew, Graham and Chiles. For a time it worked. But their impact upon party building after they left office was limited, and no one of comparable stature replaced them. Party decline was also matched by national events, particularly in the Republican dominance of ideology from 1994 to 2006.

The Republicans were more successful. Beginning with the Reagan era, the national party working with state leaders built a strong organization from the ground up. Events from the 1950s to the 1970s worked in their favor. Republicans took advantage of the moderate Democratic shift to support civil rights and school desegregation, not by outright racial pandering, but by opposing affirmative action and governmental set aside programs. They responded to the use of illegal drugs by declaring war on them, and they opposed the legalization of abortion despite *Roe v. Wade.* In the process Republican publicists stressed the threats to traditional moral values of conservative Floridians.

Religious institutions played their part, not necessarily as handmaidens of any party, but in their emphasis on traditional Biblical values. Many newcomers to the state left behind extended families,

neighbors and other social networks in their migration to the Sunshine state. The rise of nondenominational churches, especially megachurches, led by often charismatic clergy welcomed these newcomers to the sprawling new residential developments in the suburbs. In congregations numbering in the thousands and sometimes tens of thousands, these churches provided programs ranging "from religious assembly to child care, church school, day care, family programs, singles programs, outreach activities, publishing houses, missionary movements, and radio and television networks" (120).

The welcome included sermons and publications emphasizing traditional or Biblical moral values that supported prayer in the schools, abstinence in sex education, and opposition to abortion and homosexuality. As Republicans in the 1990s increasingly emphasized these moral values, conservative newcomers and established residents (despite their own occasional peccadillos) supported them. They also supported tax cuts, limited governmental powers and the party's nationalistic foreign policies.

Republican state leaders in the 1990s, such as Clay County's Tom Slade, played their part. Following the census of 1990, the legislature oversaw the reapportionment of state and congressional legislative districts. Colburn describes Slade building alliances between Republicans and African Americans to create districts guaranteeing black and Republican representation at the expense of future Democratic party control. As Colburn wrote, "The apportionment deal literally assured black leaders that the number of state legislators would increase from fourteen to nineteen, and that the number of black members of Congress would increase from zero to three" (142). The remaining white districts became disproportionately Republican as seen in the election returns in the mid to late 1990s.

Initially the shift from Democratic to Republican control was episodic. Voters elected Claude Kirk as the first Republican governor since Reconstruction in 1966. But Democrats Askew and Graham held that office for the next sixteen years. Bob Martinez election in 1986 was followed by two terms for Chiles in the 1990s. Only in 1998 with the election of Jeb Bush as governor did Republicans gain uninterrupted control down to the present day. In effect, Republican gubernatorial dominance has only spanned the past decade, and even there Colburn suggests that stronger Democratic contenders–absent in the last three elections–might have won.

The legislature was another matter. While Republicans secured a majority in the state senate in 1995 and in the House of Representatives two years later, both houses generally have been more conservative than the governor, with the possible exception of Jeb Bush. A clear example is the contemporary property tax issue. Regardless of what happens in future presidential and gubernatorial races, this legislative dominance looks to last for a long time. Combine Republican dominance in the legislature and governor's mansion for more than a decade with President Bush's substantial victory in 2004, and Florida appears to be a solidly Republican state. That may or may not change in 2008.

The excesses of Republican foreign policy and the extravagant spending of the current president may challenge party allegiances in 2008. Colburn does not conclude that the Republican hegemony has deep roots. In the rapidly growing, changing, complex, social and cultural character of this megastate, philosophical roots are not deep. Candidate personalities may still trump party politics as they have done in the past.

In sum, while Floridians have seen a shift from Yellow Dog Democrats to Red State Republicans, continued population growth in this fourth largest state could shift the color toward purple or blue, depending upon circumstances (war or the economy), or the strength of emerging leaders. The future is up for grabs.

Colburn's history of Florida politics over the past sixty years is a well balanced study. It describes at length the efforts of Democratic leaders to adapt to changing times and hold on to power. It also shows Democratic weaknesses and the increasingly strength of the Republicans. Ultimately the Democrats lost control due to events, and to the conservative political and ideological transformation that change much of America in the past generation.

One small quibble. In reviewing the 2000 election and its aftermath, Colburn, like most observers, overlooks the 10,000 discounted ballots cast in Duval County in the inner city of Jacksonville which would have produced different results.

This said, *From Yellow Dog Democrats to Red State Republicans: Florida and Politics since 1940* is a solid piece of scholarship and a comprehensive survey of state politics over the past sixty-five years deserving of a place on the book shelf of any thoughtful Floridian, or non-Floridian, concerned about the past, present and future of this state.

James B. Crooks, *Professor Emeritus* *University of North Florida*

Mule South to Tractor South: Mules, Machines, and the Transformation of the Cotton South by George B. Ellenberg. (Tuscaloosa: University Press of Alabama, 2007. Acknowledgements, introduction, conclusion, illustrations, notes, index. Pp. ix, 219. $42.50 cloth.)

My father's favorite story about his family's mule was the one when John carried ten-year-old Ann to the mailbox, some half-mile distant, let her down off his neck, and proceeded to trot back to the house without waiting for her to finish checking the box. Or was it the one about the time his father thought he had killed recalcitrant John with a hastily-flung hammer when the mule decided to lean over while being shod? (John survived; he also stood ramrod straight at every subsequent shoeing.) It seems that everyone who grew up in the rural South before World War II has a favorite mule story, and, as Jerry Leath Mills has argued, every southern story has a dead mule in it. Despite its ubiquity in southern culture, the mule has not had its historian. George B. Ellenberg, an associate dean and associate professor of history at the University of West Florida, remedies this sad situation in his fine monograph.

The mule is a hybrid animal created by the mating of a male (jack) ass with a female (mare) horse; it cannot produce viable offspring. The preferred mode of farm power in the South for roughly a century, the mule was especially popular among staple crop farmers. Ellenberg argues that the mule's popularity followed the expansion of the cotton economy in the second third of the nineteenth century. Seeing mules as an improvement over the horses and oxen—they could be put to work younger, worked longer, harder and on lesser food than horses, and at greater speed than oxen; many also believed mules were smarter than either in the traces—planters believed mules to be the perfect draft animals for their to their slaves, whom, they believed, could not be trusted with more fragile stock. The postwar expansion of cotton agriculture and sharecropping only increased demand for mules. Cotton planters, however, relied largely on breeders outside the region for their mule supply largely because of the costs and intricacies of keeping and mating jacks and mares. Ellenberg ably reconstructs the trade networks that connected breeders in Kentucky, Missouri, and Texas, with the planters of the Cotton South, and explores both the economics and culture of mule trading.

Early twentieth-century agricultural reformers complained that planters' reliance on outside sources for mules added to the region's poverty and encouraged local mule production. However, Ellenberg argues, it was not until the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) sponsored programs in mule breeding in the 1920s and 1930s that rural southerners attempted to breed their own stock. At that point, however, it was already too late: the tractor was on its way into the fields. Or was it? In his most compelling chapter – drawn from a 2000 essay in *Agricultural History* – Ellenberg demonstrates that the appearance of small tractors in the 1930s and 1940s did not spell the immediate end of the South's relationship with the mule. Instead, southern cotton farmers continued to rely on mules for most of the work on the farm until the development of the mechanical cotton harvester made it possible for them to consolidate their landholdings. Like sharecroppers, mules had little place in the modern Cotton South. Indeed, as Ellenberg shows in his final chapter – this one drawn from a 1998 essay in *Agricultural History* – the disappearance of both at the same time was hardly accidental, but the product of cultural assumptions (many that explicitly linked mules and African Americans) about the place of either on the modern farm.

Ellenberg's respect for the mule and the southern rural world it represented is apparent throughout this work, but he never falls for romantic vision of the southern agrarian past or its assumption that modernization did nothing but harm to the fabric of southern society. One of the strengths of Ellenberg's work is that he picks up nicely on the bureaucratic tension within the USDA created by its dual missions of improving life for rural people and modernizing agriculture, a tension that, for example, had the department simultaneously supporting programs in mule breeding and tractor demonstration. Ellenberg, however, is not an apologist for the USDA, its programs, or the assumptions of agricultural modernization in general. He never flinches from demonstrating the wrenching changes on rural people's lives affected by state policy or the power agricultural elites—from tractor manufacturers to large planters—had in shaping these policies. What is most impressive about Ellenberg's work is the way he places the process of agricultural change squarely back in the hands of the people instead of forces. There was nothing inevitable about the disappearance of the southern mule, or the mechanization of southern agriculture in general; no unrelenting force of modernization

made planters or bureaucrats buy tractors (or chemicals or harvesters). They made choices based on their own circumstances and experiences—often very foolish, racist, and short-sighted choices, for sure—but their own choices nonetheless, a lesson rural historians of all stripes should take to heart.

Evan P. Bennett *Florida International University*

For Jobs and Freedom: Race and Labor in America Since 1865. By Robert H. Zieger. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007. Pp x. 276. $37.50 cloth.)

Only a few years ago, the subject of race and labor constituted a historiographical minefield. Scholarship and politics mingled freely, with the latter often informing and, in some instances, shaping the former. Few works in the field escaped the spotlight shined upon them by Herbert Hill, the polemical industrial relations scholar who harshly condemned and dismissed many studies for failing his litmus test of condemning union racial practices. The so-called Hill-Gutman debate, launched by Hill following the death of social historian Herbert Gutman, unfortunately framed—and polarized—the field for many years. From a somewhat different vantage point, whiteness studies took labor history to task for its supposed ignoring or downplaying of race. Contentiousness, to put it mildly, was rife.

Under such inauspicious circumstances, could synthesis even be possible? The answer, it turns out, is yes. An abundance of solid case studies of African-American workers and trade union race relations, much of it nuanced and sophisticated, belied the accusations of Hill and the whiteness crowd and provided an empirical foundation essential to such a project. Ironically, for a field dominated by political progressives, the first recent attempts at synthesis were authored by conservatives David Bernstein and Paul Moreno, who, like Hill, portray unions (to varying degrees) in a negative light and, unlike Hill, depict an unfettered labor market in a positive way.

Robert Zieger's *For Jobs and Freedom* is much more representative of the tone and substance of the thrust of the field. Like most labor historians, he unabashedly embraces the labor movement as a "legitimate and essential component of a democratic society," (4) stresses its role in "fostering workplace equity and civic

engagement," (6) and acknowledges the harmful role of racist unions. Unlike the conservative synthesizers, Hill, or whiteness scholar-activists, he emphasizes the straightforward point that "for the most part, black workers have sought entry *into* the labor movement"(5). Structuring his interpretive overview is the contrast between organized labor's "egalitarian civic claims and its complex—and, it must be said, often disappointing—engagement with the country's profound racial dilemmas"(7).

Zieger's always judicious and singularly non-political account tells two intertwined stories. The first centers upon the evolving place of black Americans in the American economy in the century and a half following slavery's demise. That story covers emancipation, sharecropping and convict labor, urban and northern migration, blacks' exclusion from skilled trades, consignment to the ranks of common labor and domestic service, and their gradual and uneven breakthrough into semi-skilled and skilled labor; for the more recent decades, it touches upon expanded access to federal employment, the impact of deindustrialization, affirmative action, and the emergence of new, intra-racial class divisions.

The second story centers on the troubled relationship between black workers and the labor movement. For the nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries, America's "multiracial working class" (22) was not represented by a multiracial movement. In fact, non-whites regularly were accorded no representation at all, while white unions often worked explicitly against their interests. Zieger, drawing upon an extensive literature chronicling the labor movement's racial exclusivity, eloquently and comprehensively traces both the thinking of white workers and the practices of various labor federations, from the National Labor Union and Knights of Labor to the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). He is attentive to what he calls the "uncharacteristic, though not completely marginal, cases of interracial unionism" (68) in the Alabama coal fields and Gulf port docks and the efforts of "a few visionary activists," (68) including those in the Industrial Workers of the World, who promoted interracial organizing. But until the rise of the CIO in the late 1930s, the story was, with a few exceptions, a fairly bleak one. White building trades and railroad unionists, joined by countless other skilled workers, kept their organizations' doors firmly shut to non-white workers. While they may have effectively restricted the labor pool and protected their

members' jobs and wages, the "mainstream labor movement paid a steep price for its intolerance,"(69) Zieger concludes. Cut off "from their own best traditions,"(69) AFL unions played into employers' hands and made "little headway"(69) in mass production industries. The new CIO, in contrast, promised a new beginning for black workers. Never one to engage in romanticism, Zieger forthrightly sets out the limits of the CIO's interracialism, balancing his appreciation for its new departure in the realm of race with its nagging shortcomings. "The CIO was a diverse organization," he rightly concludes, "and the role of black workers varied sharply in the different industries in which it operated" (115).

Those limits notwithstanding, union membership meant a great deal to black workers, whose job security, wages, and working conditions improved considerably. Black workers joined unions in larger numbers and increasingly chafed at and challenged persistent discrimination in the newly unified AFL-CIO. Black unionists, Zieger makes clear, were an important force in the emergent civil rights movement of the 1960s, bringing an emphasis on jobs and economic inequality to the movement's agenda. "[T]oday's diversity-celebrating and affirmative action-supporting AFL-CIO is a far cry from the racist and immigrant-bashing labor movement of a century ago," (232-33) Zieger argues. Many believe that "blacks and other people of color" represent "the only real hope of reviving and revitalizing a labor movement" that has been "in decline for a quarter century" (229).

The promise of the civil rights revolution ultimately clashed with the transformation of the American economy and politics in the decades after the 1960s. Deindustrialization, capital flight, the expansion of the service economy, and growing anti-union sentiment altered the political terrain on which struggles over labor and race were fought. Affirmative action emerged as a highly contentious issue; black workers in public employee unions found themselves opposed by black mayors, and the expansion of the black middle class was accompanied by an intensification of urban poverty and the underclass. After 1980, Zieger writes, "the crisis of the black inner city coincided with hard times for the U.S. labor movement" (223). Today, the current divide between the AFL-CIO and the breakaway Change to Win Coalition threatens to undermine blacks' recent gains.

Zieger is far more attentive to the relationship between African Americans and the labor movement and blacks' labor

market experiences than he is to individual or collective efforts by black workers to achieve civil rights and equality in the economic realm. Although he briefly addresses the campaigns of A. Philip Randolph, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, as well as others, the book's focus remains largely on the big picture, not on the endeavors of activists and caucuses. Yet Zieger's balanced, thorough, and responsible account of that big picture represents a significant achievement in the realm of synthesis. Anyone interested in the broad subject of African Americans and labor will find *For Jobs and Freedom* an indispensable starting point.

Eric Arnesen *University of Illinois at Chicago*